

THE GENUS BESLERIA IN BRITISH GUIANA (a)

C. V. Morton

Up to the present time only one species of Besleria (Gesneriaceae) has been known from British Guiana. In connection with monographic studies of this genus the writer has noted three more species, none of which can be identified with any previously described.

Key to species

Calyx lobes free.

Calyx more than half as long as the corolla (Subg. Pseudo-besleria); flowers cymose on a common peduncle; corolla red; leaves and stems appressed-pubescent.....1. B. laxiflora.

Calyx one-third as long as the corolla or less (Subg. Parabesleria); flowers aggregate in the leaf axils; corolla yellow; leaves and stems hirsute.....2. B. saxicola.

Calyx lobes united for over one-third their length (Subg. Eubesleria); leaves and stems appressed-pubescent.

Flowers borne on a common peduncle; calyx lobes equal to or a little longer than the calyx tube.....3. B. verecunda.

Flowers aggregate in the leaf axils; calyx lobes one-half as long as the calyx tube.....4. B. insolita.

1. BESLERIA LAXIFLORA Benth., Lond. Journ. Bot. 5: 361. 1846.

Through the courtesy of the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, I have been able to examine the type of this species, an unnumbered specimen collected by Schomburgk in British Guiana. The North American plant which has passed as B. laxiflora is found to be quite different and must bear the name B. chiapensis Brandeg. A second specimen of B. laxiflora, also in the Kew herbarium, was collected at Surinam, Rio Branco, Amazonas, Brazil, by E. Ule (No. 8459).

2. BESLERIA SAXICOLA Morton, sp. nov.

Subg. Parabesleria. Frutex 1.5-1.8 m. altus, vix ramosus; caules teretes, superne hirsutissimi, inferne glabrescentes, ca. 6 mm. diametro; lamina foliorum oblique elliptica, membranacea, maxima ca. 30 cm. longa et 12 cm. lata, apice breviter acuminata, basi late vel anguste cuneata, remote serrata, supra sparse hirsuta demum glabrescens, subtus imprimis in nervis hirsuta, nervis secundariis 7-9; pet-

iolus usque ad 10 cm. longus, angulatus, hirsutus; pedunculus communis nullus; pedicelli numerosi in axillis foliorum, vix 1 cm. longi, hirsuti; lobi calycis liberi, lutei, ovati, valde imbricati, 6-8 mm. longi, apice acuminati vel subulato-acuminati, parce hirsuti, longe ciliati; corolla lutea, ca. 20 mm. longa, utrinque glabra, basi non saccata, sursum ampliata et paullulum ventricosa, lobis vix patentibus, late rotundatis, glabris; filamenta libera, crassa, glabra; antherae liberae vel connatae, loculis confluentibus; staminodium bene evolutum, ca. 3 mm. longum, glabrum, antheram sterilem gerens; ovarium conicum, glabrum; stylus puberulus; stigma bilobum; discus semiannularis, crassus, glaber.

Type in the U. S. National Herbarium, no. 1,056,446, collected by brook in forest, Tumatumari, Potaro River, lat. 5°20' N, British Guiana, January 3-5, 1920, by A. S. Hitchcock (No. 17,375); a duplicate in the herbarium of the New York Botanical Garden.

Additional specimens examined: BRITISH GUIANA: Type locality, Gleason 420 (Gray Herbarium, N. Y. Botanical Garden, National Herbarium); Moraballi Creek, near Bartica, Essequibo River, Sandwith 58 (Kew, N. Y. Botanical Garden); Potaro River, Abraham 345 (Kew).

It is related to Besleria montana Rusby, of Bolivia, but that species is widely different in its long-pilose corollas. A closer relationship is with a species of Peru as yet undescribed.

3. BESLERIA VERECUNDA Morton, sp. nov.

Subg. Eubesleria. Frutex (?) 1.2 m. altus; caules superne sparse strigosi, inferne glabri, teretes; lamina foliorum elliptica vel elliptico-oblonga, maxima 22 cm. longa et 10 cm. lata, apice acuminata, basi cuneata, in petiolum decurrens, serrata basi excepta, supra pilis paucis hyalinis appressis praedita, subtus imprimis in nervis strigosa, nervis secundariis 7-9; petiolus longus (usque ad 7 cm.), parce strigosus; pedunculus communis usque ad 4.5 cm. longus, strigosus, flores paucos (3 vel 4) simpliciter umbellatos vel raro cymosos gerens, pedicellis tenuibus ca. 2 cm. longis, fere glabris, apice vix incrassatis; tubus calycis campanulatus, sparsissime strigosus, ca. 5 mm. longus, lobis 7-8 mm. longis, lanceolatis, integerrimis, apice subulato-acuminatis; corolla 20 mm. longa, glabra, basi ecalcarata, non saccata, sursum vix ventricosa (ca. 7 mm. lata), lobis ca. 2.5 mm. longis, erectis, rotundatis, glabris, aequalibus; antherae connatae, in medio tubae corollae sitae, loculis confluentibus; staminodium basi corollae bene evolutum, ca. 2 mm. longum, antheram sterilem gerens; ovarium ovoid-eum, glabrum; stylus longus, glaber; stigma bilobum; discus annularis, crassus, glaber; bacca coriacea, tuberculata, sem-

inis rubris minutis in utroque parieti placentarum adspersis.

Type in the U. S. National Herbarium, nos. 57,862 and 57,863, collected on the Upper Demerara River, British Guiana, in September, 1887, by G. S. Jenman (No. 5156). Duplicate types are at Kew and the New York Botanical Garden.

Besleria verecunda is not closely related to other species of Eubesleria. It suggests B. laxiflora Benth. (Subg. Pseudobesleria), which occurs in the same region, but that is at once distinguished by its nearly free calyx lobes, its more numerous flowers which are only 12 to 13 mm. long, and its smaller short-petiolate leaves.

4. BESLERIA INSOLITA Morton, sp. nov.

Subg. Eubesleria. Frutex (?) 0.9-1.2 m. altus; caules teretes, superne hirtio-strigosi, inferne glabrescentes; lamina foliorum elliptica vel elliptico-oblonga, maxima ca. 25 cm. longa et 10 cm. lata, apice breviter acuminata, basi cuneata, serrata basi excepta, supra strigosa mox glabrescens, subtus strigillosa, nervis secundariis 8-12; petiolus usque ad 7 cm. longus, strigillosus; pedunculus communis nullus; pedicelli numerosi, in axillis foliorum, 12-15 mm. longi, hirtio-puberuli; calyx flavus, cylindricus 7-16 mm. longus, omnino hirtio-puberulus, lobis quam tubo duplo brevioribus, mucronatis, erectis; corolla ochroleuca (f. Bartlett), calyce paullulum longior, glabra, ecalcarata, vix ventricosa, lobis parvis, rotundatis, glabris; antherae connatae; ovarium glabrum; discus annularis, glaber, tenuis, altus; fructus deest.

Type in the Kew herbarium, collected in French Guiana by Martin.

Additional specimens examined: FRENCH GUIANA: Poiteau (Kew). BRITISH GUIANA: Holmia, Potaro River, November, 1907, A. W. Bartlett 8743 (N. Y. Botanical Garden). A specimen without collector or locality of collection designated is in the Copenhagen herbarium.

The present species is related only to B. lutea, of the West Indies, from which it is distinct by its more narrowly cylindric, hirtio-puberulous calyx, cream-colored flowers, and thin high disk.

- - - - -

(a) Published by permission of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.